

WITHNELL URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH FOR THE
YEAR 1939.

To the Urban District Council of Withnell.

Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,

I have the pleasure to present a Report for the year 1939 upon the health of the Urban District of Withnell. Owing to war conditions it has been necessary to omit certain statistics.

A. STATISTICS AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE AREA.

The area of the district is 4190 acres, and the estimate of the population for mid-1939, as furnished by the Registrar General, is 2750. The average population appropriate to the calculation of death rates is 2801. The population figure at the census of 1931 was 3040.

The number of inhabited houses, according to the Rate books, at the end of 1938 was 857. (Census 1931 - 804).

The Rateable value is £12,566, and a penny rate produces £51.

Social conditions in the district have continued to improve throughout the year, due to the reduction in unemployment. This reduction in unemployment unfortunately is mainly the result of War work, which has absorbed a considerable number of people. The chief industries are in full work.

Vital Statistics.

	Total.	Male.	Female.
Live (Legitimate	43	25	18
Births (Illegitimate	1	1	-
Still Births	3	3	-
Deaths	41	16	25

Deaths from puerperal causes.

	Deaths.
Puerperal sepsis	Nil
Other puerperal causes	Nil
Total	Nil

Death-rate of Infants under one year.

All infants per 1,000 live births	Nil
Legitimate infants per 1,000 legitimate births	Nil
Illegitimate infants per 1,000 illegitimate "	Nil

Deaths from Cancer (all ages)	4
Deaths from Measles (all ages)	Nil
Deaths from Whooping Cough (all ages)	Nil
Deaths from Diarrhoea (under two years of age)	Nil

B. GENERAL PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICES FOR THE AREA.

Acting Medical Officer of Health.

Thomas Schoales Hall, M.D., B.Sc., B.Ch., D.P.H., up to September 1939.

Archibald Dodd, M.D., Ch.B., M.A.C.H., L.R.C.P., D.P.H., from 1st. October 1939.

Part-time Officer. Remuneration £80 per annum.

Dr. Hall has been with H.M. Forces on Active Service since the outbreak of war and I have acted as Medical Officer of Health since 1st. October, 1939. Dr. Hall and I have also been employed as Assistant Medical Officers on the Staff of the Lancashire County Council.

Reference was made in last year's Report to advantages and disadvantages of one person holding the joint offices of Acting Medical Officer of Health of the Urban District and Assistant County Medical Officer. This arrangement undoubtedly facilitates co-ordination of the health services.

During the War period in the absence of Dr. Hall it has not been possible at all times for me personally to perform all duties allocated to me. I have however, always been able to spend adequate time in the Local Authority's work. Thus, despite the exigencies of War time, I do not think the Local Authority's work has suffered.

Sanitary Inspector.

Cyril Leach Gregson, M.I.H.E., M.S.I.A., M.R.San.I.,
a part-time Officer holding the appointment of Surveyor.
Remuneration : - £130 per annum.

No other Public Health Officers held office during the year.

Ambulance Facilities.

Arrangements for transport of cases of infectious disease have been made with the Chorley Joint Hospital Board. Transport of non-infectious cases is undertaken by the hospital or neighbouring Local Authorities in which the hospitals are situated.

Air Raid Precautions.

Progress has been made during the year with the general scheme for Air Raid Precautions in the District. Much credit is due to Mr. Gregson, the Surveyor and Sanitary Inspector, who is also Executive Officer for Air Raid Precautions at Withnell, who has been mainly responsible for the administration of the Scheme. He has spent an enormous amount of time and energy in A.R.P. Work and this has limited the time available for sanitary work.

Thanks are also due to Doctors Clarke, Byres and Gordon, and to Mr. Marsh for the work done in training volunteers. Credit is due to the volunteers for their conscientious service.

It has not been possible to obtain all the facilities which we should like locally, but it is apparent that a district of small population must be dependant for part of its services on nearby districts.

C. SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA.

Water Supply.

The raw upland surface water is supplied by the Liverpool Corporation. Bacteriological tests made in November and December of the raw and filtered waters were below accepted standards of purity for a potable water. At the end of the year investigation was proceeding. The results of investigation and

Water supply contd:-

remedial measures recommended will form part of the 1940 Report.

A new water main has been laid during the year from the Waterworks to the boundaries of the district in Harbour Lane and School Lane for the purpose of supplying water in bulk to Chorley Rural District Council. These mains have been extended by the Rural Council to serve portions of Higher Wheelton.

Drainage and Sewage.

The sewer extension from Withnell Fold to Chorley Road and Flag Lane mentioned in last year's Report was completed. No other important extension has been carried out during the year.

Closet accommodation at the end of 1939.

Number of	privy middens	Nil
"	" pail closets	258
"	" dry ashpits (excluding middens)	80
"	" moveable ashbins	757
"	" houses on water-carriage system	598
"	" fresh-water closets	681
"	" waste-water closets.	41

Commendable progress was made in the conversion of pail closets to fresh-water closets, 56 being converted during the year compared with 31 in the previous year.

Ninety-two fixed receptacles were replaced by moveable ash-bins, compared with four in 1938.

Public Cleansing.

Dry house refuse is collected by motor lorry and tipped.

Sanitary Inspections in 1939.

141 premises were visited and 181 defects or nuisances discovered. The number of nuisances abated was 169. Six informal and 51 Statutory notices were served during 1939.

Swimming Baths.

The Council owns the Public Baths. The Plunge bath is 75 feet by 25 feet. Slipper baths are also provided. The filtration plant is old and has a 10-hour turnover. Its efficiency will be assessed during the summer when the bath is used by a considerable number of bathers.

Schools.

The condition of the schools is generally satisfactory. During the year the pail closet system of one of the schools was converted to fresh-water closet system. All schools have now closet accommodation of the fresh water type.

D. HOUSING.

The total number of new houses erected during 1939 was five. These were built without State assistance by private individuals. There is no appreciable difference in Housing in Withnell since last year's Report.

The Council adopted a policy of compulsory conversions of pail closets to fresh-water closets and applied for a loan for the purpose. Owing to changed conditions, the loan applied for has not been available, and consequently, it has been necessary to suspend this work.

E. INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD.

Milk Supply.

Samples of milk have been taken periodically from five farms which supply milk to schools in the district. The examination results were satisfactory.

Dairies and cowsheds are periodically inspected. The general conditions are satisfactory.

Dairy Farms.

Number of Dairy Farms.	18
Approximate number of cows in district	300
Number of cow-keepers (including the dairy Farms)	35
Number of inspections during the year.	10
Number of dairymen or milk purveyors (other than cow-keepers)	1

Meat and Other foods.

Slaughter houses and shops have been inspected periodically. The meat sold is generally of good quality. All meat is now coming from the central depot at Blackburn.

Bakehouses.

Six bakehouses exist and were in good condition during the year.

F. PREVALENCE OF, AND CONTROL OVER, INFECTIOUS DISEASES.


At the end of the year the Council decided to enter into an agreement with the Chorley Joint Hospital Board for the provision of accommodation for cases of infectious disease. Under this agreement cases of infectious diseases are admitted to the Heath Charnock Hospital at Chorley. The Board has five beds for Small-pox exclusively set apart for its use at the Finnington Hospital near Blackburn, and under the Agreement this provision is intended to cover the needs of the Withnell District.

Notifiable Infectious Diseases other than Tuberculosis.

The following table shows the incidence of notifiable infectious diseases in the various age-groups during 1939 :-

Notifiable disease	Total cases notified.													Hospital	
	Total cases at all ages.	Age - Periods - Years.												Total Deaths.	Total cases removed to Hosp: from Dist:
		Under 1.	1-	2-	3-	4-	5-	10-	15-	20-	35-	45-	65 and over		
Scarlet Fever.	3						1	1	1					Nil	1
Diphtheria	4			1					2	1				Nil	4
Acute Pneumonia	3							1		2				Nil	Nil
Erysipelas	2										1	1		Nil	Nil

Deaths in Hospital of persons belonging to District. NIL.



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Tuberculosis.

One new case of Respiratory Tuberculosis was notified during 1939 in a female in the 35 age-group. No deaths of Withnell residents attributed to Tuberculosis occurred during the year.

Cancer.

Four deaths from Cancer occurred during the year. These were all in females of the following ages respectively, 42, 54, 66 and 71.

I thank the Members of the Urban District Council for their unfailing interest in matters relative to the health of the District and for their courtesy and help.

Yours faithfully,

A. DODD.

Medical Officer of Health.
